DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 725 HE 022 696

AUTHOR Thompson, Patricia J.
TITLE Hestian Education: Everyday Life as a Curricular Paradigm.
PUB DATE 29 Mar 89
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, March 27-31, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Daily Living Skills; Family (Sociological Unit); *Feminism; Higher Education; Home Economics; Humanization; *Life Style; Role Theory; Social History

ABSTRACT

Everyday life as a curricular paradigm is discussed in this paper, beginning with a look at public and private feminist dilemmas, at the creation of nonpatriarchal categories, and at the everyday world seen both as phenomenon and as problematic. Numerous feminist scholars have addressed the question of a feminist standpoint on everyday life, and it is possible that the Hestian/Hermean paradigm can provide a thread through the labyrinth. The Greek goddess Hestia was the protector of the hearth, and her influence in the ecology of everyday life was pervasive. Hestian space was sacred and secular, and the hestia symbolized a spiritual presence. The god Hermes was the protector of public space, bridges and communication, so the system of action that operates in the public world is referred to as the Hermean sphere or domain. The discussion focuses on the following: the Hestian, or feminist, standpoint; the Hestian/Hermean division of labor; revising a genderless Gestalt; Hestian knowledge; and a Hestian model for curriculum. Educators today must confront the question of whether a curricular model grounded in the Hermean domain can be supported at the expense of the Hestian domain. These are not, strictly speaking, women's issues but rather human issues illuminated by women's scholarship, thinking, experience and curriculum building. Contains 32 references. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED309725

HESTIAN EDUCATION: EVERYDAY LIFE AS A CURRICULAR PARADIGM

Patricia J. Thompson
Lehman College, CUNY
The Bronx, NY 10468

> [Home economists] are concerned with the everyday, common, familiar routines and attitudes and practices that are usually performed within a family setting. We ... know that problems do not arise in isolation, that a person or a family lives a unified, whole life -- not ten minutes as an artist, two days as a biological process, a week as a social being, and an hour as a philosopher. Yes, to study these aspects effectively we separate them artificially in order to see them better. But we know that all operate simultaneously and are mutually influential and interdependent.
>
> Marjorie East
> *Journal of Home Economics* (1965)

Why must we conceptualize the everyday? Isn't it just there? What can one say about the commonplace, the ordinary, the taken-for-granted? They are matters of "common sense." They are the day-in, day-out humdrum events of human life punctuated by occasional breaks in the round of routines that typify our daily and nightly doings. The everyday is just background for the "important" events in one's life. We welcome the excitement of something *out* of the ordinary, something not experienced every day. This paper addresses the importance of being able to see the everyday for what it is -- the bits and pieces of experience that collectively comprise a human life and to suggest a paradigm for "everyday life" that will also serve as a curricular paradigm.

Paper presented at a Symposium "Public and Private Domains: Everyday Life as Problematic" at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA, March 29, 1989

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Patricia J. Thompson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE 022 696

Public and Private: Feminist Dilemma

Feminists have sometimes had ambivalent feelings about the "everyday." Elshtain asks why a personalized, localized, particular female subject should be brought into the more abstract, rationalist, universal mode. She says:

> the private world ... is the theater of particularity and everyday concrete meaning. If that mode were suppressed altogether in favor of the exigencies and demands of abstract personhood and the pull towards rationalization, technological definition, and universalism, who would tend to the little world, keeping alive its life-redeeming joys and tragedies? ... does any feminist ... thinker reeally want to so relocate female subjects and reconstruct the matrix of their traditional identities by substituting the terms of universal, bureaucratic socio-economic imperatives that, as women achieve a public identity, they lose this other world and the values imbedded with it entirely? (p 305)

In our attempts to deal with social problems, we have become accustomed to examining structures from a visible, public perspective. Yet other, invisible structures operate in human life. They are the structures of everyday life, created by the perennial demands of meeting primal needs: food, body covering and shelter, and human care and connection. Primal needs are programmed into our biosocial makeup. The demands are placed on every living person who in turn makes demands on the natural, social, and built environment. Primal needs may be met in various ways. Meeting them always involves an exchange of energy and information within systems that are interrelated, interdependent, and interconnected. Mills (1979) recognizes that "as a specific sphere of everyday life, the family has its own specific logic and does not simply mirror the relations of production" (p. 75).

Elshtain (1982b) urges the reflective feminist to consider the important fact that Americans remain committed to family life and that it would

take major social pressure and manipulation to destroy that commitment (p. 332). She argues that the reflective feminist "must be as concerned with the concrete existences and self-understandings of children as she is with female subjects. Her mode of theorizing must locate this concern as central" (p. 333). She rejects the "antifamilial" thrust of certain feminist "orthodoxies" in favor of a feminism that affirms a vision of the private-familial sphere as having its own dignity and purpose. In her view, particular experiences and spheres of action "exude their own values and purposes, and have ends not attainable by, or within, other spheres" (p. 335). Elshtain calls for "the redemption of everyday life, a recognition of its joys and vexations, its values and purposes, and its place in becoming human" (p. 335).

Creating Nonpatriarchal Categories

One of the challenges to feminist scholars is the need to work with categories they had no part in creating. Historically, men constructed a language in which "man" appears as a universal in public discourse and "man" subsumes both the masculine and the neutral. Consequently, the male standpoint is an integral, not incidental, aspect of both ruling and its self-styled mode of consciousness, labeled "rational" and even "intellectual." Public discourse and texts (including documents of all kinds) support patriarchy, the male-intensive network that reinforces the dominant position of an elite class of males, i.e., the "ruling class" whose privileged position brings with it the perquisites of power. In the West these relations were exacerbated by the rise of capitalism that intensified the differentiation of the private/public spheres. The private sphere has generally been assumed to be a restrictive and confined one for women who function in the "offstage," "nonpublic" space of the domestic

domain

Smith (1987) cautions against imposing conceptual categories on people by "using the criteria that clean them up to make a better fit between the world and the discursive entity expressed in the categories" (p. 131). She recognizes women's struggle for higher education opportunities in the latter half of the 19th century which continues today within "marked boundaries," the most important of which "reserves to men control of the policy-making and decision-making apparatus in the educational system" (p. 26). Her argument goes beyond equality of opportunity to call attention to women's location in the social processes of setting standards, producing social knowledge, acting as "gatekeepers" over what is admitted into the system of distribution, innovation in thought or knowledge or values and participating in other ways as authorities in the ideological work implicit in the educational process (pp. 26-27).

Males enjoy authority not as individuals but as members of a social category. Belonging to this privileged category grants influence to even the least able and competent member of that category merely by virtue of membership in it. How different it would be if we recognized the standpoint of women in the domestic or private domain as an equivalent category. Of all the disciplines, Home Economics is the only one that seeks to construct theory and to build essential knowledge on the basis of women's place in the family and the world. It has sought to establish a place for itself on terms of parity with the ruling elites of educational institutions, but its extrapatriarchal location makes it uniquely vulnerable.

By and large, it seems safe to say that feminist and other women scholars hold stereotypical views of Home Economics, and they never enter

the structures of relevance that attract women to the discipline and engage their commitment to its knowledge system.

Feminism locates its major arguments within the very context being disavowed. Home Economics -- the first "women's movement" in education -- has been eclipsed, even silenced, by many liberal, radical, Marxist, and socialist feminist writers. A considerable amount of feminist activism, research, writing, publishing, and teaching has challenged the structures of meaning taken as "givens" in patriarchal society. It has subjected them to different tests of verification -- most notably through consciousness raising. A single "voice" of protest has given way to a "collective voice" to which many women and men have begun to listen. There is a growing awareness among large numbers of women that they share a common consciousness that challenges prevailing patriarchal paradigms. This has led to reconceptualization of the dominant male-defined discourse in a number of disciplines. Over the past decades, home economists have felt pressure to conform to the prevailing patriarchal ideology by being asked to change the name of their discipline in an attempt to improve their image. It is now generally accepted in feminist theory that the power to name has been taken from women -- including home economists. The demand for "name change" is evidence of the power of patriarchal reality-definers and the havoc they can wreak on a woman-defined discipline (Thompson, 1981; 1984). The creation of Home Economics as a distinct academic discipline at the turn of the century can be viewed as an early attempt to codify an extrapatriarchal perspective on reality that reflected women's experience of the world.

The Everyday: Phenomenon and Problematic

Smith proposes a strategy of inquiry she calls "the everyday world as

problematic," by which she means "an organization of inquiry that begins with where women actually are and addresses the problem of how our everyday worlds are put together in relations that are not wholly discoverable within the everyday world" (p. 47). She notes that the standpoint of women is located outside the texts of patriarchal discourse. In *The Everyday World as Problematic*, Smith lays out the paradoxical situation of a discipline of social relations that excludes from its formulations a major segment of the participants in those relations -- women. She calls into question whether sociology as a systematically developed consciousness of society and social relations can sustain its claims of objectivity so long as it excludes from its domain the presence and experience of particular subjectivities (p. 2). Established sociology maintains a standpoint from inside the relations of ruling which views society and social relations in terms of the perspectives, interests, and relevances of men who participate in relations of ruling (pp. 2-3). As used by Smith, the concept "relations of ruling" refers to such extralocal institutionalized systems as government, law, business, finance, education, and professional organizations that reduce actualities to abstractions and displace the personal with the impersonal:

> We are not ruled by powers that are essentially implicated in particularized ties of kinship, family, and household and anchored in relationships to particular patches of ground. We are ruled by forms of organization vested in and mediated by texts and documents, and constituted externally to particular individuals and their personal and familial relationships. (Smith, 1987, p. 3)

In her view, the common world of women and men -- the Home -- became increasingly differentiated and the domestic became a discrete and lesser sphere confining and confined to women and on which the domain arrogated to men has continually encroached (p. 5). The direction

of people's personal lives is increasingly de-centered to the public world, and the knowledge and judgment related to everyday human concerns is shifted from individual control to government and economic decision makers. Smith has proposed women's standpoint as situated outside textually mediated discourses in the actualities of our everyday lives. She suggests that this standpoint is designed in part by women's exclusion from the making of cultural and intellectual discourse. It also reflects the way women's work has been typically organized, work that anchors the impersonal and objectified forms of action and relations to particular individuals, particular local places, particular relationships. Women "have been assigned and confined predominantly to work roles mediating the relations of the impersonal and objectified forms of action to the concrete local and particular worlds in which all of us necessarily exist" (pp. 107-108).

Smith cautions us to distinguish between the everyday world as problematic and as phenomenon. She uses the concept of problematic to relate the sociologist and sociological inquiry to the experience of members of a society as knowers located in particular situations in a new way (p. 91). If the notion of problematic raises the discourse to the level of abstraction and theory, then the challenge to feminist home economists is to abstract from the particular those aspects from which questions -- both latent and manifest -- originate and can be pursued.

Everyday life is not random or episodic. It is cyclical and patterned. Its first ground is the everyday natural world, a phenomenological world. By that I mean a world of change -- a dynamic rather than a static ground of being. The life we call "human" is part of that world and interconnected with it. Whereas Smith cautions us with respect to working inside a

discourse we had no part in making, I believe we must make visible and elevate to conceptual and abstract respectability that private domain that has been uniquely "ours," but not ours alone. This is difficult if we accept not only patriarchal categories of experience but patriarchal valuations of that experience. Is it possible to redefine every category of human experience defined by patriarchy and used to describe a set of experiences that specifically excludes those "presocial" forms of experience as well as the ongoing unformulated, uninformed notions that lead to "postsocial" experiences which represent a living counterpoint to the patriarchal piper's tune? Is it possible to reject the hegemony of a single standpoint that makes false claims of universality and to shift to a different approach that allows us to accept dual perspectives so that both the "inside" and the "outside" of the system can be conceptualized simultaneously? How can we use the oppressor's images, ideas, symbols, language, and grammar to work our way out of the conceptual system that imprisons us?

The Hestian Standpoint

Numerous feminist scholars have addressed the question of a feminist standpoint. Jehlen (1981) employs the metaphor of Archimedes for whom lifting the world was theoretically possible but would require that he locate himself and his fulcrum somewhere other than on the earth. Jehlen argues for a "terrestrial fulcrum" for feminist theory. Employing a somewhat different metaphor, I will argue for a different perspective. I believe that the Hestian/Hermean paradigm can provide a thread through the labyrinth.

The Domestic Domain: The Hestian Sphere

The central space of the *oikos* in Homeric and classical Greece was the

hearth, called the hestia. The hearth was under the protection of Hestia, the premier goddess of the ancient Greek world. The name of the hearth and the name of the goddess were the same. Hestia was invoked before each meal and on the birth of each child. Her influence in the ecology of everyday life was pervasive. She defined what came to be known as "domestic space." Because of Hestia's dominant presence at the site of "hearth and home," I call the system of human action in which household, family, and home are interconnected the Hestian sphere or domain. Hestian space was both sacred and secular, and the hestia symbolized a spiritual presence in the *oikos*.

Women and slaves of both sexes did most of the Hestian work of the *oikos*. Hestian work consists of the myriad interrelated, interdependent tasks and skills that must be managed and coordinated in order to sustain the family as an ecosystem. The tasks were then much the same as they are today: food production, acquisition, preparation, service, and storage, textile production (household spinning and weaving), and clothing acquisition, construction, storage, and care; acquiring, furnishing, and equipping shelter, arranging care and education for children and care for the sick, infirm, and the aged; and the maintenance of intimate relationships through family-based rituals and the reciprocal exercise of kinship rights and responsibilities. The purpose of the Hestian system is to meet the life support or survival needs of its members in a direct, personal way. It is sustained by systems of action based on feelings of love, care, and connection. The Hestian domain provides the normative setting that allows families to build and maintain systems of action that lead to maturing in individual self-formation as well as achieving the self-actualization of the family as a unit. To characterize such work as

"housework" belies its role in the creation of human capital. Hestian work is human work essential for individual and family survival. It benefits those who perform it and those for whom it is performed. It enables them to mature in individual self-formation and enables the collective entities called families to "mature" as well.

The Political Domain: The Hermean Sphere

By contrast with the *oikos*, the domain external to the household, the so-called "public sphere," was known in Greece as the city-state or *polis*. The *polis* had a public hearth situated in a public building (the *pyrtaneum*), a sort of "town hall," where Hestia was invoked to legitimate the actions taken there. The god Hermes was the protector of public space, bridges, and communication. For this reason I call the system of action that operates in the public world the Hermean sphere or domain. Only free male citizens were permitted to do the Hermean (public) work of the *polis*. Hermean work consists of the tasks and skills necessary to sustain the power system of the *polis*. The Hermean domain is maintained through systems of action based on the need to exercise power and control. The Hermean domain supports the systems of action that contribute to the development of the State where social goals are formulated and implemented for families. There individual family members, as citizens, participate in their critique and formulation.

The Hestian/Hermean "Division of Labor"

As the Hermean domain of the *polis* grew in power and influence, it gained control of the resources and institutions essential for the performance of survival-oriented Hestian work. Hestian work, believed to be entirely "manual," was devalued. Hermean work, considered to be exclusively "mental," was valued. These contesting values orientations

with respect to the handwork/manual work and headwork/mental work division of labor continue to this day. Hestian work (performed both in households and in "homelike" or "family type" Hestian spaces in public places such as day care centers and soup kitchens) is regarded as low status work. Hestian work, which promotes individual self-formation and family wellbeing, is largely invisible because it takes place out of public view in private, domestic, or Hestian space. In today's world, the Hestian domain is female-intensive and invisible and either under- or de-valued. Home Economics, the discipline of the Hestian domain, suffers from this devaluation. However, powerless or low-status males also perform Hestian labor, often called "maintenance work," at low wages in public facilities.

Hermean work is considered high status work. The Hermean, political domain is male-intensive and highly visible. It is highly "publicized." In fact, it is so visible and so dominates the communications media that it overshadows and diminishes the significance of the Hestian, domestic domain. Hestian work requires intelligence and skill and secure spaces in which to perform it. We should consider the resistance to the presence of such Hestian spaces as food labs, textile and clothing and interior/environmental design labs, and child development centers in Hermean educational systems. Public controversies over food, clothing, shelter, child care, and family decision-making prerogatives are examples of the conflict between Hestian/Hermean values and the tension that exists between the two spheres. After years of neglect of the Hestian domain, Hestian matters become issues in the Hermean domain when they reach crisis levels as problems of child abuse, family violence, hunger, and homelessness.

In challenging the fundamental assumptions that guide our thinking, we are in effect removing the ground from beneath our feet. Reasoning must have a starting point. For too long it has been assumed that the foundational texts, i.e., male texts -- and male texts alone -- provide the grounding for rationality. Jehlen concludes that if the very axioms of Western thought already incorporate the sexual teleology in question, feminists, like the Greek philosopher, would need to seek a place off the planet altogether (p. 576). She argues that to see the conceptual universe whole feminists really need a standpoint that rests firmly on "male ground" (p. 576). I would argue that, using the Hestian/Hermean paradigm, a shift in perspective in our mental universe is possible without a comparable shift in our gender universe. I am here proposing a shift that brings both the "female world" and the "male world" into fresh perspective. Constructions of the mind give meaning to the social and physical experiences we take for granted. Perhaps the time has come to describe in abstract Hestian/Hermean language the assumptional world that women have claimed on the basis of their experience and to make it accessible to those (females *and* males) whose experiences have been "different."

The category "woman" is itself problematic. I am not here arguing for a gendered standpoint, but rather for a standpoint from the lifeworld of women that can be universalized in the same way that the male-oriented standpoint of our texts and traditions has done for "mankind." We are oriented in the world through a number of finely tuned senses, the nuances of which were unknown to the ancients. Our knowledge comes from many sources simultaneously, and the nonverbal forms of communication which can be silently decoded -- especially by women who have been denied a "public" voice -- is an important source of information, especially

concerning one's location -- or status -- in a social hierarchy. For example, the language of space, of food, of the built environment are all viewed as elements in the text of human experience. Smith-Rosenberg (1985) has addressed this problem by viewing language as a symbolic system that can be decoded, allowing us to hear "ancient voices discussing the social and economic experiences that informed their lives" (p. 5). She has asked whether women give radically different meanings to words. She includes as women's "texts" such things as dress and food codes, religious rituals, and various forms of sexuality.

Studies of the nature of biological sex and the construction of gender reveal not two dichotomously segregated biological sexes, but a continuum of chromosomally linked typologies that identify the individual from birth as either "male" or "female." Thereafter, a cultural imprint is superimposed on the biological imprint to create degrees of "masculinity" and "femininity."

Revisioning A Genderless Gestalt

Smith recognizes the existence of a faultline in our cultural and social traditions. She identifies an extrapatriarchal standpoint brought about by the systematic exclusion of women's experience from the textual discourse of the public world. I have proposed a re-vision of our patriarchally defined paradigms that goes beyond gender and focuses instead on two interdependent systems of human action that can be traced back to classical Greek thought (see Figure 1). By recognizing the existence of two co-equal, complementary spheres of human existence, each of which provides a unique standpoint on the human condition, I believe we can gain a new perspective on personal, political, economic, ethical, technological, scientific, and educational issues.

Insistence on a single, patriarchally defined, *polis*-based perspective has caused the "split," "doubled," or "skewed" vision to which feminist writers refer. Feminist theories are currently grounded in the perspectives of gender and class. I believe feminist theory must go beyond gender in order to draw a more rounded human picture. A different, *oikos*-based standpoint contrasts with a "woman's standpoint" however arrived at. The dual systems approach permits a systems analysis of the gender-influenced issues of everyday life. In the Hestian/Hermean model we have a paradigm that allows us to consider the questions of language, human-environment relationships, power, technology, gender relations, class, and other aspects of everyday life.

The Hestian *oikos* and the Hermean *polis* are ongoing systems of action, each with a history and a future. If we are to intervene through education in the processes that affect the quality of everyday human life, we will need to dissect them as they pertain to each of these systems. The Hestian/Hermean domains are not "mirror images" of one another, like a Rorschach ink blot. They are not each other "in reverse." They exist in *relation*. They are complementary and interdependent. The Hestian/Hermean domains can be distinguished from one another, and their simultaneous improvement -- a "better" private life and a "better" public life -- can best be achieved by an educational program that takes both into account.

I am proposing a theoretical foundation that directs our thinking to what is central and ultimately the most significant location for the individual's life as she/he lives it. The particular must be as highly valued as the abstract -- both theoretically and practically.

The everyday world is organized by more than social relations. Indeed,

social relations may be viewed in part as based in the demands made by that world on us as a precondition to other forms of endeavor -- especially the extralocal mode of abstract rationality characteristic of the impersonal Hermean ("macrosociological") world. Human beings have never been able to take the practical organization of subsistence, i.e., "Hestian work," for granted. This has been brought home to us in dramatic ways as we see the escalating evidence of worldwide hunger, homelessness, and family crisis.

The Hestian domain offers a discourse organizing different relations among subjects than those created by the conditions of control and the relations of ruling. The Hestian domain represents a beginning point, a unique standpoint from which human consciousness develops. The Hestian standpoint is a site outside the patriarchally legitimated standpoint as it appears in the textual discourses of the Hermean domain. The consciousness developed and the knowledge gained in each domain become constituent, complementary parts of the world as we come to know it in totality. The Hestian domain can be defined both spatially and temporally. It supports the "real," ongoing coordering of daily and nightly practical activities in and through which human beings bring their common world into existence. It is both a life support system and a lifeworld. Its activities occur simultaneously with and often parallel the relations of ruling that typify the Hermean domain. The infrastructure of the Hestian domain rests on the essential activities of human existence that are necessary, practical, and particular. Hestian work is not exclusively "women's work," but women appear to have done a disproportionate amount of this labor. The Hestian domain is an immanent world in the sense that it is constantly in the process of becoming -- being made and remade --

but never finished. By contrast, the Hermean domain is transcendent in the sense that it is the domain of "completed" projects, i.e., completed in the sense that they "run their course" and find their way into public discourse as part of the record of human achievement. Texts represent a significant part of these projects, and texts are embedded in and organize relations among participants in the discourse of the public world. To paraphrase Smith (p. 213):

> The relations of ruling have a Hermean character. Power of various kinds has come to mean for men entry into a Hermean world of rational calculation and management or into a technical and scientific world of the expansion of systematic knowledges. It has meant the application of Hermean modes of theorizing and inquiry in a wide variety of settings, bringing politics, literature, art, and warfare into the Hermean domain.

The Hestian/Hermean domains exist in a relation of interdependence, and the work done in the Hestian domain makes the continued existence of the Hermean domain possible. It is true that women's life experience is localized in Hestian space, but women are not restricted or confined to them any more than men are restricted or confined to Hermean spaces. That the influence of each sex in the differentiated domains is disproportionate is indisputable. To be sure, males predominate in the valued Hermean sphere. They bring visibility to the entire sphere. Females predominate in the devalued Hestian sphere. Their very presence contributes to the invisibility of the entire sphere. As a result, the Hestian sphere has become privatized, feminized, and otherized. The two spheres are not gender-defined but socially-defined, especially by powerful reality definers in the Hermean sphere who impose their definitions on the Hestian sphere and deprive those in it (including home economists) of their "voice" in defining themselves.

The Hestian/Hermean systems exist in dialectical relation; they

comprise the total human system. Their fragmentation contributes to false consciousness. For the whole to function properly, *each* system must be in dynamic equilibrium, and they must *both* balance each other. Hestian/Hermean knowledge, curriculum, and education are parts of an indivisible whole.

Although the Hestian/Hermean domains are systems with boundaries, the boundaries are permeable. Transactions take place across them continuously. Systems thinking lifts the burden imposed by such patriarchal concepts as dominance, hierarchy, and hegemony that contribute to false consciousness in the modern age. It replaces the patriarchal lexicon with a gender-free or at least a gender-neutral conceptualization of human *being* and human *becoming*. In our re-visioning and re-reading of texts, we can now disclose the image of our total being from a unified, not fragmented, perspective. Our total human existence is reflected in the Hestian/Hermean dialectic in which both genders participate on equal terms -- but not on terms of equal value in each domain.

The fatal flaw in feminist theory has been its inability to account for *all* women as demonstrated by feminists' inability to include Home Economics and home economists in their view of Woman. As a result, our "doubled vision" continues to be astigmatic and not clearly focused. We can support a "genderless gestalt" that recognizes a dual system in which gendered perspectives are both inputs and outputs of the system.

Hestian Knowledge

What would happen to our understanding if we were to write our experience and organize our knowledge from a Hestian rather than a Hermean perspective? What if we invert our lens of analysis, making the

Hestian locus of women's experience rather than the Hermean locus of men's experience the focus of our study? The Hermean domain rests on the invisible activities of the Hestian domain. Its control of the resources of power and its legitimation of patriarchal power relations have had a disastrous effect on the activities and skills needed to meet Hestian needs. The Hermean domain is reinforced by public institutions that have the power to name and support Hermean interests and issues and to convert or translate Hestian interests and issues into Hermean language. As "public causes," Hestian issues become "politicized."

The exclusion of women and the suppression of the Hestian domain are two separate but related phenomena. At a given time, one can be "inside" the Hestian space and "outside" Hermean space. That position affords a dual standpoint from which to develop themes and construct relevancies. Our grasp of the Hestian domain stems from our awareness of a once invisible domain of human action and the actors who occupy it and generate the process-product relationships essential to support life. Its invisible components can be abstracted just as can those in the visible Hermean domain. The gendered character of Hestian/Hermean domain-based activities is not due to some intrinsic or essential aspect of human nature. It has come about through a number of socially and historically related factors influenced by the collective gender bias of patriarchal texts. Bureaucratization in the Hermean domain fragments the interests and issues located in the Hestian domain. The Hestian domain as an analytic category transcends gender. What we have ordinarily characterized as "social conscience" is, I submit, the upsurge of Hestian consciousness that is caring and seeks connection.

We must look at the appropriate organization of knowledge for both the

Hestian/Hermean domains. The individual possesses a timebound historicity, but Hestian/Hermean demands are transhistorical. The transformation of actualities into abstractions is not restricted to the Hermean domain, for which abstraction is the lingua franca. The third order world is one in which ideas take on a life of their own. Subjects are located in each and have a different standpoint in each location. Multiple perspectives open up to the individual subject (male *or* female) who moves among them. However, the actual location of the human self is in the reality of the everyday Hestian world. Our "dual vision" of the world has validity. In the final analysis, the primary human mode is Hestian. We follow the program of the human species encoded in our genes. We put the social world together through the programming of our culture. The pattern of "coordering" and "concerting" actual activities in which people "coact" creates the objective relations of the common environment, i.e., the material and social contexts in which we operate in our everyday life and in which we become "cosubjects." Our "primary" or "original" world is the one in which our life support activities are conducted. Once the umbilicus is severed, the individual is helpless and dependent and to some extent remains helpless and dependent for all its days. We can compare *our* world with *the* world. As Smith observes, "The social construction of reality is precisely that of creating a world we have in common -- the 'known-in-common-world.' It is the work of continually accomplishing a world that does exist as a reality that is the same for me as it is for you" (p. 125). I maintain we need a binocular vision of the Hestian/Hermean systems to accomplish this.

Educators recognize the consequences of neglect of the Hestian sphere

in terms of personal unhappiness, family breakdown, substance abuse, and domestic violence. This neglect presents us with a host of problems -- both educational and political. The question before us is whether we can dismiss Hestian education because it is "feminine" in favor of Hermean education because it is "masculine." Our failure to identify the dual spheres of human action and both the Hestian/Hermean aspects of human consciousness as relevant for a total human education is one of our most urgent educational challenges.

Luttrell describes the Hestian themes inherent in "common sense" knowledge:

> Women do not experience their exclusion in the same way, however, their daily experiences of maintaining a household, raising children, and sharing a life with men vary according to race and class and create different imperatives for women's ways of knowing. Race affects how women claim knowledge, which is reflected in how the black women differentiated common sense from "real intelligence." First, they did not make the same distinctions between mental and manual ways of knowing or emphasize the intelligence required to do manual work perhaps because black men have historically had limited access to the "crafts." Instead, they viewed common sense, most often referred to as "motherwit," as encompassing everything from solving family disputes to overcoming natural disasters. It was not uncommon for black women to identify both men and women relatives who possess commonsense capabilities that stem from keeping families together. (pp. 40-41)

The paradox of knowledge in the Hestian domain where collective experience and consensus on what knowledge is cannot be compared with Hermean knowledge, including scientific knowledge, that is arrived at through the "evidence" of collective experience and consensus of gatekeepers on what constitutes a "fact" or a "Truth." Hermean knowledge fits into a hierarchy of knowledge in which some claims carry more weight ("power") than others.

> The particulars of meeting individual needs make it impossible to universalize this knowledge and thus make women's collective

> claims to the knowledge of relationships unthinkable. Therefore, women's knowledge and power are structurally excluded from thought. (p. 42)

Women of diverse ethnic, religious, racial, and class backgrounds do not experience the work of being women in the same way. Luttrell concludes that:

> the paradox and the challenge of education for all women under patriarchy are to confront the balance of power as they pursue new and different kinds of knowledge. What is important to emphasize, however, is the *ideological nature* of the knowledge women seek. The universality and rationality of schoolwise knowledge conceal its opposite: that credentials and instrumental reason are not answers to asymmetrical and unequal social relationships. If women are to claim rather than simply receive an education ... we feminists, sociologists, and educators must be prepared to untangle both the ideologies and objective conditions in women's lives that render our work, knowledge, and power invisible. (p. 44)

A Hestian Model for Curriculum

Adopting the Hestian lens of analysis allows us to see the Home Economics curriculum not as a program dedicated to educating females for traditional roles but as one promoting recognition of the fact that human beings everywhere and at all times are confronted with a set of perennial problems grounded in their essential nature as human beings, not the "essential nature" of biological sex. Perennial problems require not theoretical but practical solutions. Can anyone doubt that both males and females share primal needs and must be educated to meet them? A Hestian knowledge system answers this need. A fair reading of women's past would show this Hestian project to have begun in the 19th century domestic science/Home Economics movement.

In 1961, under the study of "material life and biological behavior," the French *Annales* historial Fernand Braudel subsumed five categories of human organization and action: biology and demography, food and

nutrition, clothing and shelter, living standards (i.e., the "level of living" or the "quality of life") in a given society, and the technologies of production and other forms of interaction between the natural and cultural environments (Stoianovich, 1976, p. 85. Citations omitted). The *Annales* paradigm focuses on the same areas that became core subjects in the domestic science curriculum in the 19th century and which continue in the Home Economics curriculum in the 20th! We have cause to ponder why the "different voice" of women was not heeded and why a "man's voice" legitimates a Hestian *idea* first articulated by the founders of what was to become an extrapatriarchal female-intensive discipline. The Hestian/Hermean split vision goes beyond issues of gender. It relates to epistemology as well as to sociocultural sex role socialization.

In Western tradition, the male dominated Hermean curriculum has taken precedence over all others. A Hestian curriculum to meet the "common sense" knowledge demands of everyday life has been devalued as vocational. As education moved out of the Hestian sphere (slaves educated youth there in ancient Greece before males moved into the Hermean agora and academy; dame schools provided Hestian education in colonial America, etc.) there developed a split in the "two spheres" of education. Hestian knowledge is *basic* education. It is basic to human survival and to surviving humanly. Hermean knowledge in public education continues to assume that the basic of everyday life will be provided in private by someone else!

The Hestian sphere co-exists with the Hermean sphere on uneasy terms, rendered invisible, voiceless, and powerless. Dissenting female and male Hestian viewpoints have been ignored. Home Economics challenges a gendered focus on epistemology and education. The Hestian paradigm

offers a new model for curriculum theory and practice. According to Lerner, the "androcentric fallacy," which is built into all the mental constructs of Western civilization, cannot be rectified simply by "adding women" (p. 200). I would argue that the fallacy is the *Hermean* fallacy, reinforced by patriarchy, that must be rectified. I would argue also that within Home Economics, among other devalued areas of education, lies the potential for a radical restructuring of thought and analysis around the constructs of everyday life which constitute a "Hestian consciousness."

Conclusions

Educators today must confront the question of whether a curricular model grounded in the Hermean domain can be supported at the expense of the Hestian domain. These are not, strictly speaking, "women's issues." They are human issues illuminated by women's scholarship, thinking, experience, and curriculum-building. Hestian education -- an empowering education at home and school -- is designed to prepare each individual to make ethical choices in his/her everyday life. We have all seen the consequences of a Hermean ethos that trivializes "hearth and home." Aren't some of our most pressing contemporary problems -- hunger, homelessness, child abuse, and family violence -- proof of the price we pay for seeking Hermean solutions to Hestian problems? At base, Hestian issues are not "women's issues." They are not "feminist issues." They are human issues that involve us all.

The Hestian paradigm permits researchers and teachers within the boundaries of their discipline, to distinguish between the Hestian/Hermean in a variety of contexts, to adapt/adopt different theoretical perspectives, to identify gender phenomena along a more finely calibrated human continuum than a dual-sphere, dual-gender dichotomy, to

recognize different timespans for female/male experience, to create alternative epistemological taxonomies, and to propose Hestian conceptual frameworks for the organization of educational programs and educational research.

REFERENCES

Clarke, Lorenne M. G. and Lynda Lange, eds. *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory: Women and Reproduction from Plato to Nietzsche.* Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1979.

Douglas, Jack, et al. *Introduction to the Sociologies of Everyday Life.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1980.

East, Marjorie. *Journal of Home Economics* 1965, 357.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981.

_____. "Antigone's Daughters." In Wendy McElroy, ed. *Freedom, Feminism, and the State.* Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 1982a, 61-75.

_____, ed. *The Family in Political Thought.* Amherst, MA: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1982b.

Gotz, Ignacio L. "Education and Masculine/Feminine Consciousness." *Educational Theory* 66:1 (Winter 1986), 23-32.

Heller, Agnes. *Everyday Life.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.

Jehlen, Myra. "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism." *Signs* 6:4, 1981, 575-601.

Kelly, Joan. *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly.* Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984.

_____. "The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory," 51-64 in above. Rpt. of article from *Feminist Studies* 5:1 (Spring 1979), 216-227.

Lerner, Gerda. *The Creation of Patriarchy.* Volume One in *Women and History.* New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986.

Luttrell, Wendy. "Working-Class Women's Ways of Knowing: Effects of Gender, Race, and Class." *Sociology of Education* 62:1 (January 1989), 33-46.

McMillan, Carol. *Women, Reason, and Nature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982.

Mills, Patricia Jagentowicz. "Hegel and 'The Woman Question': Recognition and Intersubjectivity." In Clarke and Lange, eds. (above), 74-98.

Smith, Dorothy E. *The Everyday World as Problematic*. Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1987.

_____. "Shotgun Marriage." *Chronicles* 10:6 (June 1986), 16-18.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. New York: Knopf, 1985.

Stoianovich, Traian. *French Historical Method: The Annales Paradigm*. Foreword by F. Braudel. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1976.

Thompson, Patricia, J. "Home Economics: The Define -*ee* and the Define -*or*." Report of a Work in Progress. Home Economics Defined Track. Annual Meeting of the American Home Economics Association. Dallas, TX, 1981.

_____. *Knowledge, Technology, and Family Change*, ed. Fourth Yearbook of the Home Economics Teacher Education Section of the American Home Economics Association. Bloomington, IL: McKnight Publishing Co., 1984a.

_____. "Home Economics: A Knowledge System -- Not a Gender System." In *Yearbook* (above), 1984b, 317-341.

_____. "Emancipatory Education: Is Home Economics the Missing Link?" Paper presented at a Symposium, "Gender Equity and Emancipatory Education: The Case of Home Economics," at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL, 1985a.

_____. "Clio's Stepdaughters: Reclaiming Our Heritage." Paper presented at a Symposium, "Home Economics: The Meeting Place of

Disciplines," at the Annual Meeting of the American Home Economics Association, Anaheim, CA, 1985b.

_____. "False Consciousness and Feminist Consciousness: Psychohistory in the Hermean and Hestian Spheres." Paper presented at a Conference, "Psychohistory: The Interdisciplinary Process -- Persons & Communities," sponsored by the International Psychohistorical Association and Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY, 1985c.

_____. "Home Economics and the Hestian Mode." *Illinois Teacher* January/February 1986a, 87-91.

_____. "Hestian Hermeneutics: A New Lens of Analysis for Home Economics." In Linda Peterat, ed. *The Conversation and Company of Educated Women: A Colloquy on Home Economics Education.* Special Publication. *Illinois Teacher.* Urbana-Champaign, IL: Univ. of Illinois, 1986b.

_____. "The Hestian Paradigm: Conceptualizing the Everyday." Paper presented at a Symposium, "Daily Life: A Baseline for Theory, Research, and Practice in Home Economics." Annual Meeting of the American Home Economics Association, Kansas City, MO, 1986c.

_____. "Beyond Gender: Equity Issues for Home Economics Education." *Theory Into Practice* 24:4, 1986d, 276-283.

_____. "Hestian Consciousness: A Grounding for Curriculum Theory and Practice in Home Economics." Paper presented at the Bergamo Conference, Dayton, OH, 1986e.

_____. "Hestian Education: A Minority View of Praxis." In Herma B. Williams, ed. *Empowerment Through Difference.* Yearbook 8. Home Economics Teacher Education of the American Home Economics

Association. Peoria, IL: Bennett-McKnight, 1988a, 329-349.

_____. *Home Economics and Feminism: The Hestian Synthesis.* Charlottetown, PEI, Canada: Univ. of Prince Edward Island, 1988b.

Figure 1.

EVOLUTION OF THE HESTIAN/HERMEAN SYSTEMS

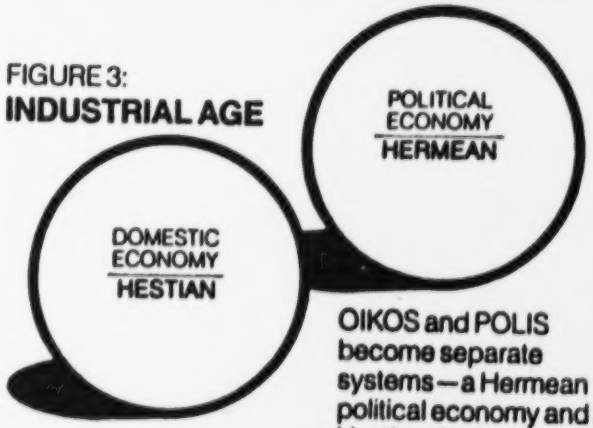
FIGURE 1: **PRE-CLASSICAL**

OIKOS, The Household. A self-contained social system in a self-contained bio-system. The kinship group is the centre of social control. Males and females in interaction. Its spiritual centre is Hestia—the hearth.

FIGURE 2: **CLASSICAL**

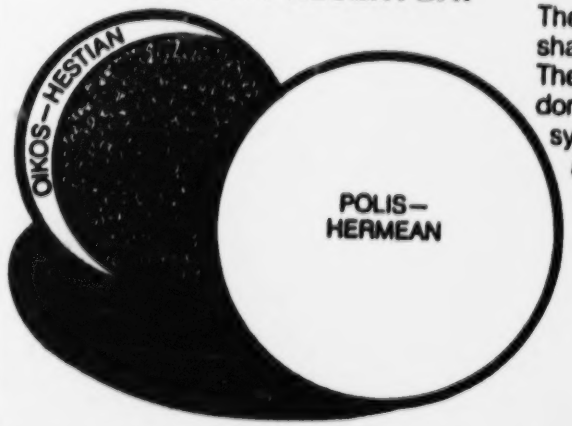
OIKOS gives way to POLIS. The Oikos becomes a private domain. The Polis becomes a city-state. The family occupies the Oikos. A public hearth signifies community in the city state.

FIGURE 3:
INDUSTRIAL AGE



OIKOS and POLIS become separate systems—a Hermean political economy and a Hestian domestic economy.

FIGURE 4: **PRESENT-DAY**



The POLIS overshadows the OIKOS. The Hermean system dominates the Hestian system. The systems are no longer in equilibrium.

1988 © Patricia J. Thompson and PEI Home Economics Publishing Collective